

# Land Use Planning and Aircraft Noise

## Time to Address the Policy Deficit?

Presentation by SASIG and Uttlesford District Council  
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# Aviation Noise a Key Issue for Local Authorities

- Amongst SASIG's membership of 37 authorities, some of whom are share or freehold owners of airports, noise from aircraft has traditionally been the single most important strategic issue arising from their interaction with the aviation sector.
- That remains the case today despite the higher profile recently of carbon emissions and the impact of COVID on aviation related employment/supply chains.
- As aircraft noise is commonly considered the most intrusive and therefore the most noticeable impact on nearby communities, it has become the quintessential 'local issue'.
- Economic impacts, airport related development, property values, safeguarding constraints, air quality, CO<sub>2</sub>, visual intrusion & surface access are all airport related matters which regularly engage Councillors, but none to the same extent of noise.

# Scope of LA Interest in Noise and the Need for a New Approach?

The forum for such engagement is usually the land use planning process or environmental health which are often conjoined departmentally or in terms of Committee structure in most local authorities.

The scope of their interest aircraft noise therefore typically covers:

- a. Aviation noise policy and legislation**
- b. Noise in the Local Development Plan process**
- c. Noise in DCOs/planning applications and planning agreements**
- d. Airspace Modernisation**

Policy too often encourages reactive approaches and confrontation rather than careful/consistent long term planning, based on clear ground rules, shared objectives, transparency, collaborative working and mediation of disputes.

# Issues which SASIG Considers Require Renewed Policy Focus

Scope of LA interest in aviation noise covers:

- (a) **National noise focused policy and legislation** - e.g. ICAO Balanced approach, Night Noise, loss of PPG24, safeguarding, mitigation, compensation)
- (b) **Airspace Modernisation** - Priority given to noise and the effect of disaggregating land use and air space planning;
- (c) **Strategic forward planning** – Handling in Local Development Plans, Local Area Action plans, Airport Masterplans and Environmental Management Plans, Noise Action Plans, CSR strategies.
- (d) **Planning Applications/Inquiries and DCOs** - handling of noise aspects through collection/presentation of data, impact assessments, consultation, mitigation, compensation etc;
- (e) **Learning from others** – Comparing national approaches, benchmarking local policy & efficacy.
- (f) **Future mobilities** – Drones, E-VTOL

# Aviation Related Noise Policy (1)

- **Need to consolidate UK Aviation Noise policy in one place:**
  - Aviation Policy Framework (2013) – mediocre document and outdated
  - Should be comprehensive coherent, easily accessible and explain in plain English
  - Educated on technical issues (e.g. measurement/metrics) and ditch the acronyms or explain them
- **New approach to Night Noise policy is important** – needs to be clear where night-time flying will be allowed, how the extent of it will be determined (e.g. sensitivity of receptors vicinity, mitigation/compensation/property purchase vs ATMs and QC count) and maintained.
- **Replacement for PPG24** (see next slide)
- **Ensure better and consistent data collected**, make it more accessible (CAA web site) and put in place **3 year research programme** reviewable annually
- **Develop guidance and technical manuals** for airports/stakeholders (e.g. ACRP in USA)

# Aviation Related Noise Policy (2)

- **Scrapping of PPG24 – took away basis for constructive engagement** between airports, LPAs and Communities - worst noise policy decision in decades.
- **Guidance in NPPS inadequate:**
  - No clarity about a policy framework against which to determine disputes - conjunction with ICAO Balance Approach is opaque.
  - Not provide a consistent national approach – data, methodology, metrics, influencing factors, receptors, responses, mitigation, compensation etc.
  - Is it appropriate to conflate policy approach across modes and/or sectors? Not integrated with related policy (e.g. Changes in Use Classes Order, PDRs, brownfield land & housing policy.
  - Relies on local solutions when many LPAs do not have the specialist expertise or resources to define contours appropriately, monitor airport performance, identify creative solutions or understand when to apply discretion and how.
  - This invites political chicanery and commercial maneuvering rather than consistent, transparent and objective decision-making.
  - Potential source of market distortion or community obliquity and blindsiding.
- **Replacement for PPG24 is urgently needed** – but old policy must be updated to reflect latest research on noise disturbance and health, WHO Guidance on noise metrics and mitigation/compensation approaches.

# Noise and Airspace Modernisation

- **Absence of explicit recognition of requirement to ‘reduce’ noise** where possible in national policy in ACOG design principles source of concern – Why reluctance? Is this under DfT instruction? If so why?
- **Disaggregation of Airspace Change from Development Plan and planning application/DCO processes** – Who made this decision and why? Needs to be urgently revisited? Causing great difficulties for LPAs in Development Plans.
- Must get this right now as it will become even bigger issue for **AAM systems** – need to be thinking now about LA role in defining detail local UTM systems/mapping. Joint study ARPAS/E-VTOL community, Airport/Vertiport representatives (RABA, AoA, BBGA, GAAC), Catapult/Future of Flight, DFT/CAA, DAs, SASIG/other national LGAs.

# Noise in the Local Development Plan Process

- **Handling in Development Plan process** – top down or bottom-up. Depends on the form and structure of National Policy.
- **What should appear in Local Development Plans** – interpretation of national policy; safeguarding (PPG24) rules; identify residential and other noise sensitive uses vs those less sensitive; constraints mapping setting out acceptable/incompatible land uses
- **Defining mitigation and compensation** (e.g. compatible measures and basis for compensation/ property purchase)
- **Local Airport Area Plans - LAAPs** should be a requirement for all Development Plan Schemes – but do they set the parameters for Airport Masterplans or provide a vehicle to adopt them so that they have statutory status?
- **LAAPs** should require Environmental Management Plans, Noise Action Plans, CSR strategies as well as Airport Masterplans and ASAS



# Noise in Planning Applications and DCO's

- **Data required** and how it should be collected/presented.
- **Identifying sensitive receptors** and compatible uses by zoning.
- Required **best practice on impact assessment** methodology and mitigation proposals.
- **Consultation process** – minimum requirements and best practice.
- **Requirements for planning applications/DCO submissions** – what must be provided in what circumstances.
- **Property purchase and compensation** etc; rateable value supplement?
- **Monitoring, reporting** and enforcement options.
- CSRs and ongoing **community engagement**.

# Prioritisation

- **Bring together extant noise policy in one place** (the Aviation Framework?) and identify those aspects which will be reviewed both when and how.
- **Ensure noise being given equal weight** in policy development and airport growth and change management processes as safety, capacity, operational optimization and CO2 considerations
- **Formalise noise as a component of the aerodrome safeguarding process:**
  - Define 'night noise' contours - airports (+ 3m) or with sensitive receptors near/under flight paths.
  - Publish noise contours for all commercial airports and reflect them in constraints planning underpinning Development Plans.
  - Proper replacement for PPG24
- **Explicitly recognise noise impact as a key design criteria in airspace modernization**, both ACOG's Strategy (SASIG has held discussions with ACOG re design principles) airport the specific Airspace Change process (CAP 1616).
- **Commission research on international comparisons, benchmark airport noise planning, reduction, mitigation and compensation performance**
- **Invite bids to Noise Improvement Fund** – airports, LAs, communities, partnerships
- **National Aviation Noise Awards** – the NANA's!